

CEASE TO WAR



J. C. HAYDEN

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CEASE TO WAR

J. C. HAYDEN



RICHARD G. BADGER

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*To those who would
"Read from some humbler poet"
I dedicate this book,
in hopes
that some sentiment herein expressed
may arrest the eye, and strike
responsive chords
in the heart of an occasional reader.*

PREFACE

FOR this little volume I lay claim to no literary merit. I should not like to say that the verses contained herein constitute good poetry; neither do I call myself a poet. In this strenuous age of commercialism, one should carefully avoid becoming known as a seer of visions and a dreamer of dreams.

In the past ages poets were revered by their contemporaries, and their verses were ravenously read by hosts of admirers. From the pen of Andrew Fletcher we have these words: "I knew a very wise man that held that if a man were permitted to make all the ballads, he need not care who should make the laws of a nation." A wise man who dared hold such an idea in this, the Twentieth Century, would be made to appear foolish thereby: for he might sing until the waves of the ocean became imbued with the symphony, and wafted his melodies even unto the uttermost parts of the earth, and his rhythm would not penetrate the senses of his fellow-man. Horace said: "But if among the lyric bards you grant me a place, with crest exalted I shall strike the stars." Did Horace live in our time, he might be glad to hide his light under a bushel.

It is the opinion of the writer that should the re-incarnation of Homer occur, and the sublime bard himself take his stand at the corner of Broadway and Fifth Avenue, and begin to sing a modern Iliad of American valor, a policeman would say, "Move on, old man, no begging allowed here."

Since it is my firm conviction that the very masters of versification would find small encouragement now, it will be the more readily understood why nothing is expected by the author of such uncouth rhyme as the contents of this book.

"But the thoughts we cannot bridle
Force their way without the will."

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CEASE TO WAR

(A Plea for Universal Peace)

DEDICATION

*To the materialization of the phantom—Universal
Peace,
To the eternal death of the barbarian custom—War,
To the betterment of the lot of man,
And to the future prosperity of the nations,
I dedicate this poem.*

CEASE TO WAR

“And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plow-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”

Micah, IV, 3.

I

Produce my harp, O! ever-cautious Muse!
For must my fingers be forever still?
I love to hear the melodies confuse
And banish melancholy from the will.
I strike a chord, I feel a magic thrill—
A thrill that floats upon the note away;
I cling to each fond, fleeting strain until
My heart exclaims, the while I sit and play:
“Would I could force the next I strike anon to
stay.”

II

The rust fluffs off my harp with every stroke.
How long—how long since hand has touch'd
its string?
Thy mercy now, Fair Goddess, I invoke
To lend thine aid unto the lay I sing.
This humble gift with contrite heart I bring;
Though fitter songs in thousands thou hast
known,
I doubt if one from soul more meek could
spring—
Vibrated thus, upon the breezes blown,
And wafted unto God upon His Golden Throne.

III

Pray, Hebe, serve a goblet fill'd for me—
A cooling draught from Lethe's mystic spray;
And thou shalt be permitted then to see
The mem'ry of the past will fade away.
Then, Hebe, flee,—I scarce would bid thee stay!
I wish to delve into the future far,
And analyze a very distant day
When mighty armies shall have ceased to mar
The lands where peaceful mortals dwell with
bloody war.

IV

With reverent hand I lift the curtain near,
And strain my eyes to catch the distant view.
Hope blossoms forth and takes the place of fear,
As, turning from the old, I grasp the new.
I revel in the sight as I pursue
The trend of thought. The mysteries unfold
That I've believed so long were overdue.
My dream seems strangely real as I behold,
Spread far away and high above, an age of gold.

V

How strange—how new—how glorious to me!
And yet at first I grope from scene to scene
And scarcely comprehend—aye, fail to see
The import such a state of things can mean
To man. And farther off above, unseen,
A greater influence still is brought to bear
And cause a purer atmosphere, I ween,
Than circulates among the natural air,
To permeate the gentle currents moving there.

VI

The ocean's brine seems like a placid lake,
The waves are calm as far as eye can view,
A foamy path lies turbulent in wake—
Resplendent, sparkling bright upon the blue,
As belly'd sail'd the vessels pass review
With stately grace. A thousand leagues or
more
Seems but a gilded mist in golden hue.
Perhaps such visions ne'er were seen before;
Would they were real—remaining thus forever-
more!

VII

These ships are freighted with their life and
trade—
Each but a link in some commercial chain;
One comes in view, then passes as a shade
Upon its destin'd path across the main.
Had I the time and purpose I would fain
Pursue thy course, O! ship, across the sea;
But duties hinder, and I must remain,
For duties such as these are joy to me.
So farewell, stately ship, sail on and let me be.

VIII

Yet all the ships I see are merchantmen,
No frowning navies bristle in their might,
For nations now no longer seek to win
Renown and prestige in unholy fight;
But memories of war have never quite
Deserted mind of man: in prose—in rhyme
They throw the glories of a better light

(This holier light illumines every clime)
Around the grand old heroes of the olden time.

IX

'Tis natural that their demi-gods should live
In love when dead in flesh, for long the weight
Of revenue and tax has ceased to give
Men grave concern. No land would instigate
A strife to wreck and ruin a weaker state;
No standing armies sleep upon their arms
And eat their nations' sustenance of late;
The peaceful farmers till their fertile farms,
And listen not in fear and dread of war's alarms.

X

All nations grow in wealth while peace prevails;
Each individual prospers with his race;
Both on frequented paths and mountain trails,
E'en in remotest solitary place,
The thrifty merchant, with his smiling face,
Pursues his trade—his trade, methinks, is right;
While high above his head, in stately grace,
The bird-man spreads his wings in soaring flight,
And passes in the dizzy distance out of sight.

XI

The screaming locomotive rushes by,
With crashing, rolling sound of steel on steel.
I watch its progress with admiring eye,
And scarcely comprehend the thrill I feel.
How throbs the pow'r of each giant driving
wheel!

How shrill the whistle bids us clear the way—
Remove obstructions from commercial weal!
The bonds of traffic must be made to pay,
And dividends cannot be earned by delay.

XII

The telephone and telegraphic wires
Are strung in mystic web above my head;
And holy churches lift their tow'ring spires
Like arms to God; below them, in their bed
Beneath the sod, repose the honor'd dead—
Aye, bury'd near the house where oft in life
Their feet on Sabbath morn were wont to tread;
Yet some lie here whose eyes have seen the
strife—
The strife when men had shouted, "War!—war to
the knife!"

XIII

I see no hungry beggar thinly clad,
Nor shiv'ring in the cold with half-shod feet.
No stranger looks depress'd nor over sad,
And passes with the crowd upon the street.
A smile is playing on each face I greet.
I start and gaze about in mute surprise,
And scrutinize each man I chance to meet.
Another light is breaking on my eyes!
Ye saints above! can this be heav'nly paradise?

XIV

A paradise in truth, but not above:
A mighty change on earth has come about,
And mortal seems to wield immortal love,

And banish all malicious hatred out
That follows close upon the heels of doubt;
Good will of man is reaching out afar,
And strewing deeds of kindness thereabout;
The wise men of the east have seen the star,
And nations have laid down their arms and
ceased to war.

XV

A flash—a haze—a phosphorescent light—
A lurid glow burns in the distant sky.
Returning consciousness bedims my sight,
And pleasant visions leave my hungry eye.
My bosom swells with one reluctant sigh.
Return, O! Hebe, more I long to see!
Be not indifferent to imploring cry.
From far away the answer reaches me:
“No more I come, for thou thyself hast bid me
flee.”

XVI

And now the panoramic views unroll'd,
Deploy'd as on some vivid moving sheet,
I see the troubled course of man inscroll'd,
The pitfalls that so long have trap'd his feet.
The tempter, with assuring voice so sweet,
Persuades the first to break the law of God;
Jehovah frowns down from His heav'nly seat,
An angel cleareth Eden at His nod,
And banish'd man to get his bread must till the
sod.

XVII

The serpent rankled in a brother's breast,
And sank his fangs within a jealous vein—

A gnawing feeling of a base unrest,
And Abel perish'd by the hand of Cain.
The masses tried to reach the sky in vain
By first ascending Babel's builded wall;
But consternation soon possess'd the brain,
And many-tongued they separated all—
Each follow'd where he understood his leader's
call.

XVIII

So thus it came about from such a thing
That each respective language form'd a race;
And every nation learn'd in time to fling
Defiance in its border nation's face;
The arts of fighting flourish'd too apace,
Until, in shadows of the distant time,
Huge armies march'd in strength from place to
place,
And devastated countries in their prime,
And kill'd, and burn'd, and stole,—nor stop'd at
any crime.

XIX

A Khufu long ago, it is supposed,
Compell'd his slaves to build a pyramid
Of solid stone and mortar, so composed
That there his cursed mummy might be hid;
And there, within his dismal tomb, amid
The symbols of his greatness carved in stone,
His body lies. Then other Pharaohs did
Survey the monument from Egypt's throne,
And imitate as best they could what he had done.

XX

And Joseph rose to serve the Hyksos king;

Apepi died, and Joseph pass'd away.
The years roll'd by, and Isra'l felt the sting
Of Egypt's tyranny and Ramses' sway;
But when each native's first-born stricken lay,
The Pharaoh bade the hated Hebrew go.
Repenting of his weakness in a day,
Rush'd he pursuing to the waters' flow,
And gazed upon his chosen soldiers drown below.

XXI

While Helen fondled Paris in the halls
Where Priam wish'd for solitude and peace,
King Agamemnon hurl'd at Ilium's walls
His chieftains burning with the wrath of Greece,
(Ye gods! 'tis well their tribe did not increase.)
But with it all the treacherous decoy
Must place the Greeks within with greatest ease,
To sack—to burn—to pillage—to destroy
The stately walls and temples of defeated Troy.

XXII

And Homer sang to eulogize these men
Such music as another sought to sing.
His verse, though sweet, had better never been
Than spur the Greeks afresh to such a thing;
Or from his muse did inspiration spring
That led the Greeks beside the crystal sea
To fight the armies of the Persian king
With valor that deserved but victory
At bloody Marathon, and at Thermopylae?

XXIII

Now Hellas pray'd beside the sea's abyss

Unto Poseidon there who sat in state,
Then met the Persian ships at Salamis,
And crush'd the fleets that lay at Athen's gate.
But link'd unto the Macedonian's fate,
The Greeks revenged invasion and its pain,
And crush'd Darius in contempt and hate
With Alexander on Arbela's plain,
'Till Persia never dared to rise and strike
again.

XXIV

The cruel Roman in his pomp and power,
With Carthage lying bleeding at his feet,
Apply'd the torch to mansion and to tower,
And e'en obliterated every street;
But Scipio found triumph incomplete,—
For absent from the victor's train unbound
Was Hannibal, sublime yet in defeat,
Preferring death to hated Latin ground,
Chain'd captive to triumphant car like mongrel
hound.

XXV

Then Caesar, grasping for the Roman world,
Crush'd Pompey at Pharsalia with his might;
And later still Octavian unfurl'd
His uncle's banner to admiring sight;
And on the waves, around dread Actium's
height,
Defeated Egypt's queen and Antony;
And when the fickle sorceress in her fright
Withdrew her galley with intent to flee,
The great triumvir, turning, follow'd o'er the sea.

XXVI

The power and the grandeur that is Rome
Has spread its sway to every civil land.
To nations that resist the legions come,
And procurators rule with iron hand.
The conquerors upon the zenith stand;
Ah, better be a Roman than a king;
Far safer as a member of his band
Than subject to the venom of his sting.
Woe unto him offending Rome in anything.

XXVII

The undisputed mistress of the world,
The arbitress of fate in every clime,
The Roman reptile ruled, securely curl'd,
Both by its public law and secret crime.
But in this distant age of Roman time
Transpired that one event, of all the best,
Rang out the crystal spheres in sacred chime,
And angels bending from the ever-bless'd
Awaken'd hope anew within the human breast.

XXVIII

Tune, heavenly angels, every holy lyre!
Assist thy humble servant now, my muse,
And kindle in my heart a sacred fire
To help me lest my ignorance confuse
Things far too consecrated to abuse.
The golden tidings down the ages spin!
We crave not blessings, Lord, beyond our dues,
But let us hear the angels sing again
Those melodies of peace on earth, good will toward
men.

XXIX

Proclaim thy victory abroad, O! Zion!
The magnitude of heaven's sacrifice;
And burn within the heart of Caesar's scion
The shining cross amid the cloudless skies—
That emblem in whose faith each martyr dies.
We render unto Caesar Caesar's dues,
And render unto God what Rome denies.
Why must we Caesar and our God confuse?
For whom a Caesar owns a Caesar will abuse.

XXX

Let's note the retribution brought to Rome,
With Visigoths and Vandals at her door.
How could the emperor protect his home;
How proudly bear the Roman eagles o'er
The canker that was eating to a sore?
The fiery Hun that march'd upon her sod
Had better held dominion evermore
Than Roman ruler from his high abode
Should flee a paltry coward from the "curse of
God."

XXXI

How must have Europe trembled at the fire
That sprang from Mecca's shrine like flames
from hell,
And spread abroad the consequential, dire
Effects that could not bode the nations well.
The fury'd and the frenzy'd infidel,
With scimiter and Koran for the boon,
Fanatically storm'd each citadel,
And Christian princes fear'd that over soon
The bloody crescent would expand into the moon.

XXXII

Its distant wing lay east of Hellespont,
The mounds of Spain were captive on the west,
While all along Sahara's northern front
The Mussulmans had burnish'd fiery crest;
And Europe writhed and seethed amid unrest
From frozen rivers to her southern shores;
But Charles Martel exposed his valiant breast
To cruel Saracens and swarthy Moors,
And stop'd their onward march upon the field of
Tours.

XXXIII

Yet think ye not the humble peasant free:
The feudal chains seem'd forged into the bone,
And bound unto the sod a serf was he,
Held subject to a noble's will alone.
The noble in his turn obey'd the throne.
The king supreme was far above the law!
The state itself, accountable to none.
Each peerless prince, thought void of every flaw,
Held subject serf and noble in the lion's paw.

XXXIV

On many promontories castles stood,
And robber barons pillaged all below.
These nobles, more by strength than by their
blood,
Amid their sycophants repulsed each foe;
And should such tower stand by river's flow,
Each barque was stop'd for tribute by its lord,
And paid him toll before allow'd to go,
Much greater toll than merchant could afford,
Nor dared he meet extortion with complaining
word.

XXXV

Why boast, ye English kings, your Norman
blood?
Could call your William more than half a king?
Could royal mother come from tanner's brood,
Or father's mistress dream of such a thing?
Could Harold, lying dead at Hastings, bring
Some slight regret unto his slayer's breast,
Control the seal, the scepter, and the ring,
The dual throne, the gem encircled crest,
Would Saxon use such things to haunt the Nor-
man's rest?

XXXVI

How dare we call the Crusades holy wars?
Can war be holy in its truest sense?
Could holiness infuse the strife of Mars
Or Christians hurl'd at infidels' defence?
The French and English, in their bold pretence,
Had little holiness, and less regret,
And no regard for treaties of offence,
And small desire for mutual weal, when met
The crafty Capet and the bold Plantagenet.

XXXVII

Why marvel that the grave that held our Lord
Remain'd to Saracens? Each Christian knight,
In petty jealousy, could not afford
To bury for the time his private spite;
Suspicious kings the while could scarcely fight
The common foe they came so far to meet;
King Philip turn'd his face to France in flight,
And left the lion heart Richard to the heat
Of desert sands—to stand alone—to face defeat.

XXXVIII

When Edward crippled France on Crecy's plain,
And Calais' bastions to the English fell,
The soil of France was dyed the crimson stain
Her brave defenders knew, alas, too well;
And noble lower'd his voice in shame to tell
That England's king might wear the Gallic
crown,
Since John, a captive under hostile spell,
On Portiers' battle field was stricken down,
And borne away in triumph to an English town.

XXXIX

The French imbued with patriotic zeal,
Though sorely press'd with England's hard
abuse,
The while they struggled for their nation's weal,
The Maid of Orleans could yet produce:
That maid who rally'd to her country's use
Those fantasies so strange, which she had found,
And turn'd the spirits of her dreamland loose,
And drawing trusty sword on hallow'd ground,
Drove back the hated English while King Charles
was crown'd.

XL

Methinks I stand beside a vessel's mast
And watch Columbus find the newer world.
The Spanish wealth increases over fast,
An hundred hostile standards are unfurl'd,
And armies bearing hatred then are hurl'd
Upon the Spaniard in his citadel.
The Spanish lip in utter scorn is curl'd,

And minstrels string their tuneful harps to tell
How Spain, amidst her glory, fought her battles
well.

XLI

The bigot Hapsburg in the flush of pride,
Both German emperor and Spanish king,
His vast dominions must, forsooth, divide,
And sink forgotten to a loathsome thing;
Among his cloisters there to pray and sing,
To beat his bosom and to wield his crutch,
And drink remorse from out a bitter spring.
Then Philip, with the scepter in his clutch,
Did hurl his Alva—curse of Spain, upon the Dutch.

XLII

When France enthrall'd was rent with civil war,
And Frenchmen died on Saint Bartholomew,
Sprang from confusion Henry of Navarre
Succeeding Valois. Then the nation grew
And prosper'd under this regime so new.
The valiant Gustav from the frozen north,
The while his soldiers tramp'd and trumpets
blew,
In military grandeur issued forth
And died to rout the Wallenstein of German worth.

XLIII

The Lord-Protector rose from common stock,
And ruled the land with more than regal pride;
The English king was order'd to the block,
And there, to please the Cromwell, Stuart died.
I seek not to espouse the Stuart side,
Nor cast on Cromwell e'en a shade of doubt,

But crime the like of this is hard to hide:
The smell of blood will linger thereabout
Although we sternly bid the carmine spot be out.

XLIV

Ne would I seek to shadow Eugene's fame,
Ne from the British duke his glow remove.
But noted chiefly through a Blenheim's name,
What benefit to mortal did they prove?
Had Louis thought the less about his love,
And more about the welfare of his France,
Had burnish'd on his crest the peaceful dove,
And worry'd less with cannon and with lance,
Then Gaul would still obey her Bourbon kings
perchance.

XLV

If stealing countries may be class'd as theft,
Then can we call the Prussian spoiler great?
How many widow'd homes the despot left
Whose men no doubt deserved a better fate!
A million bosoms must have harbor'd hate,
And mourned their loss amid his battles won;
For in the wreck of each impoverish'd state
Were crippled victims of the victor's gun
That belch'd its thunder at the German Amazon.

XLVI

Now boast I one my countrymen revere—
A captain whom ambition dares not claim.
Arise, ye tyrants, bare your heads to hear
My humble mention of his hallow'd name:
The honor and the glory of his fame,

Reflecting on each deed that he hath done,
Forbid his country shed a tear of shame
To ponder o'er his battles lost and won,
The noble life, the higher course of Washington.

XLVII

There are some names I blush too much to tell:
Those pow'rs who stoop'd to wreck the Polish
state.
The nations know the facts, alas, too well:
How triple baseness circumvented fate,
And realized the blunder all too late;
For though the Polish kingdom may be dead,
It smolders in the fury of its hate,
With patriotic blood the flames are fed
In hopes the vengeance may survive to reach a
head.

XLVIII

We can but pity how the Frenchmen died,
Each noble scion of a noble sire;
It was but vainly that the Bourbon tried
To stop the ravage of consuming fire.
Aristocratic pride we scarce admire,
But rabble rule is even worse, I ween,
With Robespierre, blood hungry, to inspire
A fury'd mob to vent its frenzy'd spleen,
And lead its fallen rulers to the guillotine.

XLIX

And England's vessels rule the briny sea,
Her flag triumphant rides the ocean wave;
The booming cannon seem but melody

To lull her dying seaman to his grave.
Upon the Spanish shore the waters lave,
And roll away upon the sandy bar;
From hence the eyes of swarthy Spaniards have
Look'd seaward on the scenes of bloody war—
Where Nelson died for victory at Trafalgar.

L

The French must give their warlike chief a
crown,
Exalt their demi-god unto a throne,
And bend the humble knee to his renown,
Because they felt his glories were their own.
His soldiers fought beside the ancient stone
Upon the banks of Nile's eternal flow,
Then threaten'd British power from Bologne,
In Spanish fastness met the bitter foe,
And perish'd by the thousands in the Russian
snow.

LI

When Wagram's smoke had clear'd the victor
stands
Upon his dizzy pinnacle of fame,
Receiving tribute from the conquer'd lands,
And gloating over European shame.
Yet some years later, is the scene the same?
Vain pride doth not precede destruction far,
And while the nations tremble at his name,
He falls a victim to the chance of war,
And Wellington at Waterloo destroys his star.

LII

When wolves and lambs in peace together feed,
And lions lose their taste and appetite

Alike unto the bullocks, in their greed,
For straw remaining on the ground that dries,
Then will the nations cease to feel surprise
That France should sink unto a British tool,
And fight beside the treacherous allies,
Before the bastions at Sebastopol.
And France the while obey'd a Bonapartist rule.

LIII

My country, shall I name thy civil war,
Or speak of Gettysburg? Our fathers died
Amid the scenes our nation should abhor.
Nor shall I boast of valor nor of pride
Display'd by victor or by vanquish'd side:
When brothers part in anger to assail
Each one the other whom he hath deny'd,
My shame is paramount—I draw the veil,
Nor doth excuse suffice, for words are no avail.

LIV

The Prussian statesman of the iron hand—
The master of diplomacy did weave
The meshes of his drag-net o'er each land,
About each sovereign he would deceive;
Upon Sadowa's field the falling eve
Beheld the Austrians in proud array,
Then on the morrow we can scarce believe
The pomp had vanish'd with a yesterday,
And that their German leadership is filch'd away.

LV

The Frenchman, dreaming of his uncle's name,
Must launch his country in a sea of storms;

And fall while reaching for the fickle fame
That lures to ruin through mirages of charms.
The Prussian, with no quiver of alarms,
Around Sedan had captured Bonaparte,
And France lay bleeding under hostile arms.
Napoleon, to compensate in part,
Was held a German captive with a broken heart.

LVI

Still clinging to the ancient name of Spain,
We view the Spaniards of the modern day.
While musing o'er the splendor of their reign
Their last remaining empire slips away:
Their ships destroy'd within Manila Bay—
The Philippines are conquer'd—Cuba free;
And still they dream of solitary sway,
And still the reverent zealot bends the knee,
And gazes back when Spanish galleons sailed the
sea.

LVII

Then next we see the Japanese arise.
Their flag displays the emblem of the sun,
And proudly waves against the glowing skies
To herald what the yellow man hath done:
The Russian navies crush'd and Mukden won,
The Russian fortress crumbled into dust;
But with the echoes of the closing gun,
Suspiciously the other nations must
Behold the victor but with envy and distrust.

LVIII

The nations build their armaments and rise
To strike the weaker countries with dismay,

Then fall as victims to the sacrifice
That must be undergone for such display,
And then amid confusion pass away.
The bards must stoop to glorify such things—
To deify each despot with a lay.
But does the poet convince himself that sings
The earth should be a footstool for ambitious
kings?

LIX

How long, Eternal God, alas, how long
Must cringing mortal bend the weary knee?
For do the chains of tyranny belong
Unto the world throughout eternity?
No man dares hope, nor should he wish to see,
The high and lowly level'd to a par;
Yet I predict the nations will be free!
Arise, O! potentates! behold the star!
Disband your armies, earthly kings, and cease to
war!

ARCANA

TO MY MOTHER,

*Whose gentle nature inspired in the mind of her
"baby boy" most of the sentiments that fall
from the pen of her grown-up son,
I DEDICATE THIS POEM*

ARCANA

Be just, Eternal Inspiration,—soothe
My senses, kind Erato, so that I
May touch the silver chords upon my lyre
And lisp some strains as soft as Orpheus
Did use to charm Eurydice. If I
In abrupt manner should profane in verse
This mystic realm where chaste Diana ruled
Among her nymphs, thy mercy, Jove, I crave
To turn aside the spray dash'd in my face
To prove her chastity,—and to transpose
My spirit to a stricken stag. And why,
Methinks, since on my shoulders fell the task
Our hero fail'd to do, should I now fear
To breathe a long, sweet sigh for things that could
Not be: to tell the world, since he can speak
No more, the dream he carry'd to his grave?
The dream is strange, but he himself was strange.
It is not true, but truly has been dream'd,
For long ago I sat beside him there
And heard him tell what I attempt in rhyme.

CANTO THE FIRST

I

The merry moonbeams play'd among the trees
That stretch'd away as far as eye could see;
The rivulet, unruffled by the breeze,
Flow'd past, as if in silent sympathy;
The scatter'd stars that sparkled up above,
And added all their lustre to the scene,
Bespoke the sweetest symphony of love
That reign'd in Nature. High o'erhead, un-
seen
By mortal eye, the mocking-bird did sing
His gladsome song of praise unto his mate:
Now shrill, now soft, the warbled notes would
ring,
Some sadly solemn as if bearing weight,
Until the spirit of sensation flow'd
From all the veins of Nature's fair abode.

II

The arms of Tellus near were raised on high
As though in suppliance to the Heavenly Throne,
The stairways of the mortals to the sky,
Where purest angels bow to God alone.
Long shadows touch'd the valleys down beneath,
And sternly banish'd all the silvery beams
From Luna's brow, which to the mind bequeath
The sentiment and subject for our dreams.
But one fair valley in this mystic clime
By sweetest smiles of Cynthia was charm'd—
Where Venus ruled in majesty sublime,
And Discord fled in terror, now alarm'd
That glowing souls in harmony held sway
And touch'd the chords that echo through my lay.

III

Within this valley, near the stream below,
A mansion stood—a fair abode, in truth,
With colonnades, and gardens where did grow,
In wild disorder, I may say, forsooth,
All fragrant flowers, planted there to bloom
And gladden eyes which shot the shafts of love:
Those shafts that pierced and banish'd all the
gloom
That crept below the mighty mounds above.
Long walks and driveways did the house surround,
By intellect of man arranged, but true
To Nature's plan; the pebbles strew'd the ground
Where squirrels and rabbits did their mates
pursue
In frolicsome abandon 'neath the trees
That sway'd in graceful rhythm to the breeze.

IV

Upon a bench beneath a little tree
There sat a man, but he was not alone:
The idol of his life was on his knee,
His little queen ruled from that humble throne;
And sweet content had fallen on her heart,
And she had ceased to seek a wider realm.
There was a time when he was but a part—
The smaller part, when, standing at the helm,
She guided on a larger ship of state
Through shoals and breakers of a sinful age
To havens safe beyond. Oh, why did fate
Decree for such an actress such a stage,
When such a part she might have play'd that she
Could cast the lots that form'd futurity?

V

Her subject—what was he? Was he a man
 Whose purposes were sway'd by everyone
 That will'd, or was he one such as might fan
 The flames of infant nations, and then run
 A race of truth 'gainst all of hell itself:
 A man who might a multitude have thrill'd
 And turn'd a heedless ear to bribing pelf?
 Ah, such he might have been had he but will'd
 But he was strange and strange was his ideal—
 A life of love to lift his purpose higher
 Became his dream. He sought to make it real,
 And thus with her he found his heart's desire.
 A nation's mark'd esteem seem'd but as naught
 To lessons that her purity had taught.

VI

Her fingers lightly touch responsive string
 Upon the Creole's favor'd instrument;
 Her bosom swells and she begins to sing
 Her song of love and happiness content;
 And Philomel grows silent at the note,
 And turning spell-bound ear to list the strain
 Of rapture now ascending from her throat,
 Declares that she will never sing again.
 The water nymphs that play upon the shore
 Draw nearer still and seek some place to hide,
 And in their own simplicity adore
 The gentle nature of this lovely bride.
 "Bride," did I say? But yet 'tis not too soon,
 For thou hast guess'd this was their honeymoon.

VII

When she had ceased she did not re-commence,
But placed her instrument upon the ground.
A kiss was all she got for recompense—
'Twas all she wish'd, for in that kiss she found
The pleasure she had left the world to find;
And she was happy to be thus beloved,
And hold dominion o'er her lover's mind
With such a sway as this: for she had moved
The sentiments that soul to soul did bind.
Then those same fingers that had pick'd the air
Play'd deftly on his heartstrings to remind
Him of his bliss. Her smiling face so fair
He drew unto his pulsing bosom now
While holy beams of love diffused her brow.

VIII

'Twas growing late: upon the distant verge
Of the horizon Artemis' goodnight,
With one last kiss to earth below to merge
And hide herself in privacy from sight
Of mortal man, was made; the stars still beam'd
In all their myriad ray'd effulgence there
Above the heath where beings sweetly dream'd,
Or pined their hearts away with cold despair;
The birds had sought their rest and ceased to sing
The songs of praise; the weary herds had found
A peaceful couch beneath the skies of spring
And placed their sleepy bodies on the ground;
The myrtle wand by mystic hand was sway'd
Above the silent sphere which God had made.

IX

In happiness sublime, a fond adieu

They bade to fairy realms, and with slow tread
Toward yonder mansion just within their view

They moved; and then he turn'd to her and said:
"My darling, thou hast brought to me at last

The pleasure and the joy I often sought
In wildest schemes and frolics of the past,

Yet never found; thy character retaught
The feelings of my childhood's gentle day,

And brought me back to Him from whom I
stray'd

Soon after Mother taught her son to pray

Upon her knee; and, sweetheart, thou hast
made

My very life respond unto thy call,

My heart—my love—my angel, thou art all!"

X

And thus the two in one long, sweet embrace

Step'd neath the portal to their rest beyond
The gaze of heaven; and leaving all the face

Of earth in sleep, pass'd on upon the fond
And only noble road that leads to bliss.

Just 'neath the door he stop'd for one long gaze,
And on her dainty dimple placed a kiss,

The same as he had done in former days
When he had woo'd and won this trusting child—

The queen that ruled his soul. He felt her
heart,

That beat in trust so pure and unbeguiled,

Flutter, then stop, she sigh'd and it did start
And beat with the rapidity of love;

O! trusting girl— O! little captive dove!

XI

Then on the ground where human feet did tread
Rush'd forth the nymphs and fairies; there, I
wis,
While on the twisted eglantine they fed,
They sought in vain to find the holy bliss
Of these two beings: for a love so pure
Had made immortals seek the realms of man,
And their own homes in cold disgust abjure.
They danced by tunes play'd by the ghost of
Pan,
And in the very atmosphere they felt
Such reverence as never known before
By them: they ceased frivolity and knelt
With one long prayer to Jove now evermore
To save this love, if man should have to be
Bathed in the fount of immortality.

XII

When all the majesty of Phoebus' cart
Show'd from the Eastern Gates now open'd
wide,
Before the deity's swift steeds did start,
Our hero, with a last look at his bride,
From whose brown eyes old Morpheus had not
Removed the spell of sleep, turn'd and was gone.
Now soon, upon some self-appointed spot,
They met (this god and man) and there alone
They laugh'd most heartily. The Sun began
To make excuses for his own defeat
At early rising; then with smiles the man
Dismounted from his steed, and at the feet
Of this offended deity disproved
That those who slept the longer better loved.

XIII

He mounted horse and rode away again,
And view'd his cultivated farm alone;
On every side stretch'd fields of waving grain
Which he and all the negroes there had sown.
The sons of Ham were early risers too,
And as they work'd he heard their merry song;
Each wore a hat of straw, on foot no shoe,
And simple garb'd they sought to do no wrong
To any man, but only thus to earn
Their humble sustenance upon the farm:
A lesson which the Aryan may re-learn,—
The simple life may bring a compound charm,
The more we have the more we long to get;
Who seek the most, most happiness forget.

XIV

For several hours thus our hero rode
And spoke a word to all the lab'ring hands—
Those black and menial tillers of the sod
Transported from their homes to civil lands
By greedy traders of a former age,
Who thus with human traffic sought to gain
Dishonor'd wealth, and left upon the page
Of history a blot which once in vain
A million hearts had bled to wipe away.
They freed the slave, but O! my Southland, can
The followers of Grant and Sherman say
That in the Federal ranks there fought a man—
Yes, only one, for all this liberty,
More brave—more well beloved than Robert Lee?

XV

Our hero now return'd and in the door

He met his old "black mammy" on whose knee
He'd listen'd to the marvelous folk-lore,

Told in her own crude way,—the tales that she
In her childhood had learn'd from those who came,

Blown by the brisk trade winds from Africa,
And brought this literature (strange the name

May sound to those beneath a western star)—
And said to her: "I guess my girl's asleep;

And, if she is, why do not rouse her now,
But save her breakfast warm, and I will creep

And close the blinds so they will not allow
The sun to wake her yet." Then she reply'd,
With laughter which she scarcely sought to hide:—

XVI

"Fo' Gawd, young mars'er, dat sweet chil' am
wake

An' walkin' all aroun' wid—" this was all
He heard just then, but stopping not to take

His hat off, quickly rush'd into the hall;
He saw just one faint glimpse of loveliness,

His heart, not eyes, inform'd him it was she,
He clasped her to him, placed a long caress

On coral lips, then paused and look'd to see
His little girl clothed in a gown of blue:

Hence she was "bluebird" not a "dove" today.
"What's in a name?" She was the same sweet,
true

Darling when near him, and when far away—
When young—when old—when well—when sick,
the same.

So, if it pleased him, why not change her name?

XVII

Now seated at the table they alone
Enjoy'd the pleasure of their morning meal.
A little despot, just as from a throne,
She ruled. No nobles, velvet-clad, did kneel
With humble mien; no sweep of armies bold
In foreign climes beneath her flag did rove;
But just the same her heart had learn'd to hold
Its gentle sway, with all the pow'r of love,
Upon our hero's mind. And was she less
A reigning queen because her realm was small?
Or less a tyrant, for with gentleness
She claim'd deep homage, services and all?
He'd found the greatest pleasure he had known—
'Twas just to be the premier of her throne.

XVIII

That afternoon when it was growing late,
And fair Apollo with a fond farewell
Had kiss'd his hand beneath the western gate
Of rest, and thrown his diamonds out to tell
The story of his splendor; while the beams
Had turn'd to gold each ripple of the waves
Upon the stream; and chaste Diana gleams
By yonder snowy cloud whose whiteness laves
The glory of the glow beneath, these two—
The man and girl, were rowing in their boat
To lisp the lines of love. Each word so true
He whisper'd in her ear while they did float
Brought radiant smiles whose brightness shamed
to naught
Those far famed wonders that the sun had
wrought.

XIX

Thus on they row'd, wrapped in each other's words

Until the light ceased playing on her brow
And all grew dark; the twitter of the birds

Was hush'd for night, when Nature did allow
Her strange and mystic sounds of forest life

To break upon their inmost sense of thought:
Perchance some animals in awful strife

On which hang life and death itself, untaught
In better ways by God, were now engaged.

Yet this for them was customary. When
These creatures of the wood by man are caged,

It leaves upon his soul a stain of sin:

For God has not created them to be

A means of gain for curious eyes to see.

XX

Our hero's dream was o'er; with one quick bound

Each sense was brought to bear upon the night;
His ears were strain'd to catch the threat'ning
sound

Of rising wind, whose now increasing flight
Breathed forth the warnings of approaching storm.

Yet for himself the elements above
Brought him no fear of death. But what if harm
Should come to his dear wife whose sweet, pure
love

And trust were placed in him? Had she been led

To this wild region far from home to die;
No gentle mother standing by her bed

For one last kiss and then to close her eye?

He breathed a pray'r to God in heav'n above

To shield from harm the object of his love.

XXI

Each muscle in his body sprang to place
As bands of steel; Determination's mark
Was writ in bold outline upon his face,
While deftly he did guide the fragile barque
With strength that show'd in every giant stroke,
Sometimes so deep that they would lightly
bound
Above the waves. At times he would invoke
The aid of God, for he could hear the sound
Of rapids by his side; down shot the oar
And the frail craft lunged forward through the
spray;
Then slowly rowing, he, with skill far more
Essential than a show of strength, would weigh
Each danger that he should avoid, and then
Through ominous darkness dash ahead again.

XXII

Anxiously look'd he at his little wife,
When o'er yon dismal mound there flash'd a light
As bright as day, to see if this dread strife
With waves and rocks and wind had brought
her fright.
She sat in peace sublime: a lovely smile
Upon her lips so red, upon her cheek
That same sweet dimple he had kiss'd oft' while
He talk'd with her at home. He long'd to speak
Soft words of love into her dainty ear
And see her blush with conscious happiness;
But in this wind he knew she could not hear,
So he postponed sweet words and soft caress;
And all the while he battled with the tide
For love and life—for safety of his bride.

XXIII

They reach'd the old stone steps before the door,
And bounding up jump'd quickly from the wind;
And just in time,—'twas not so long before
The storm burst forth. Then through an
open'd blind
They watch'd the thousand fiends of hell break
loose

On earth. Perchance it was the devil who,
With all the pow'r at his command, did choose
The world below in dismal ruin to strew,
Then make a fresh assault on heaven's gate
With fury'd cherubim and frenzy'd hosts
Of imps, and there to turn the tide of fate
That banish'd him below: so with the ghosts
Of men whose souls had come to him in hell,
He practiced here to train his army well.

XXIV

Upon a rock on yonder highest peak
He sat in state, and with his mighty arm,
He threw his bolts and brands and sought to wreak
The wrath he felt, and find some fiendish charm
To break the power of God. Bright streaks of fire
He flung through all the blackness of the night;
And with his staff of devils did conspire
In thund'rous tones upon the lofty height.
Through all the horror rang an eagle's scream,
As shaft of fire did dislodge the rock
That held her nest; another bolt did seem
To strike her down—or quiet from the shock
She ceased her wail. What agony had wrung
That cry? What dreadful death had claimed
her young?

XXV

Another brilliant whip wrap'd 'round an oak,
 Whose age had stood the storms with strength
 applied
 For over fifty years, and with a stroke
 Of restless might and pow'r broke off the side
 Of yonder boulder, and together they
 Crash'd through the smaller trees as tumbling
 down
 They desolated all upon their way
 And madly rush'd below to level ground.
 The rattle and the beating of the rain
 Upon the roof above their heads the while
 Brought to the ear a sad and wild refrain
 Match'd with the other sounds. Upon this pile
 Of wreck and ruin, and on these angry skies
 There gazed from out the window, two brown eyes.

XXVI

Our hero's arm stole 'round their owner's form
 And drew her from her troubled, lingering gaze
 To sweeter realms, and on her lips so warm
 He rain'd caresses—touch'd the chord that plays
 The melodies of female sentiment,
 And listen'd to sweet sighs as though the songs
 Sung by the angels held him in content—
 Bound meekly in the last fantastic thongs
 Of love. Those precious eyes were heavy now
 With weariness, and dreamland's drowsy clime
 Had softly thrown its shadows on the brow
 Whose very thoughts were form'd in holy
 rhyme.
 So all this love, devoid of every doubt,
 Soon banish'd thoughts of dreadful night without.

XXVII

Upon the morrow, wind and rain had ceased,
All signs of clouds had vanish'd from the skies;
And after hideous night, since God so pleased,
He show'd the world a lovely morn could rise.
Upon each leaf there hung a diamond bright
And sparkling with the rainbow's purest beams—
A gem which, seized, would disappear from sight
And leave but mem'ries of its radiant gleams.
Thus many mirages of joy may prove,
Both dazzling and alluring 'till obtain'd.
The only joy the heart can know is love—
Love pure and simple, not unreal and feign'd;
Some doubt there can be such a love so true,
Such live to learn, and often learn to rue.

XXVIII

Such love, dear reader, as you find in verse
Both can be lived and has been lived before:
Turn from the modern way—turn and rehearse
The lines of buried bards, then doubt no more.
They lived—they loved—they wrote, and writing
gave
The sweetest flowers to a desert clime.
The world moves on and weeps not o'er each grave
That holds a poet—moves on and reads the
rhyme
That they have form'd—aye, also learns to scan
The metre's feet. But when will mortals learn
To fathom all the nature of the man
Who thus portrays his thoughts? When will
they yearn
To cease the grasping greed of modern life
And live like our young hero and his wife?

XXIX

They fish'd upon the bank within the shade
 Beneath a tree one dewy summer morn.
She got a bite, and laugh'd with glee which made
 Her cheeks turn red. And was this flower born
To blossom unadmired here upon
 The verdant bank? No! for her husband saw,
And never had he seen a fairer one.
 He look'd through eyes that could not find a
 flaw
Upon her face, yet there was none; so he
 Stole just one kiss; his arm did then entwine
Her dainty waist, another kiss, and she
 Forgot the fish and threw away her line:
Quite natural to her sex,—a woman's wish
Would ever choose a man before a fish.

XXX

Away they went, the fish—the line—the bait,
 Like Cleopatra's loss for Antony.
Their love was pure and Egypt's false, so Fate
 Placed on her shoulders quite a light decree.
She had her throne, she took her seat and
 ruled,
And gave her orders to her minister:
She taught him etiquette 'till he was school'd
 In all the homage he should pay to her.
The recompense for all such service this
 Was rather great to claim for just the pow'r
Behind the throne he gave—it was a kiss.
 Be careful, sir, lest you destroy the flow'r,
In all this storm of kisses which you give!
Can you expect a blossom thus to live?

XXXI

One eve they found a cave, and resting there,
They wonder'd what lay deep beneath the
ground
Far from the human eye. The chilly air
And mystery convinced them they had found
Some Mammon's cave, secreted here from view
Of prying eyes. He made a torch, and then
They boldly plunged therein to witness new
And solemn sights which seldom eyes of men
Had seen before. At first a dismal lane
Of dreary rocks was all that they could see,
And disappointed Majesty would fain
Have given stern command to leave, but she
Was mortal woman, curious to know
All things above the ground, all things below.

XXXII

And well she was, for soon they walk'd into
The grandest palace human e'er beheld.
Ten thousand crystals burst upon their view
And caught the flick'ring light, one moment held
It in the natural prisms, then return'd
It, magnified and glorified, sublime
In its magnificence. These wonders burn'd
Their beauties on the retina so time
Would not efface them. For they gazed en-
tranced—
Aye, spellbound—speechless, I may say, in awe
Of all the myriads of years advanced,
In strict accordance with the natural law,
While slowly oozing water seeping down
Had wrought these brilliant gems from common
ground.

XXXIII

A few yards in advance there lay a lake
On whose dark bosom all the rays above
Reflected with a lurid light to make
Mind marvel more at all this grand alcove
Beneath the ground. Our hero stoop'd to view
An ivy cover'd cup there cast away,
Perhaps left by some goddess when she flew
At their approach. He fill'd it with the
spray
Of sparkling nectar of immortal life
Beneath his feet, and raising it he drank,
With one long draught, a toast unto his wife:
"O! sweetest goddess ever on this bank,
All three fair graces cast charms in thy way,
Then in their envy pined their hearts away."

XXXIV

The nymphs and satyrs of the forest who
Had sought repose from revels here to sleep
Gazed from afar—aye, look'd to love these two
Who loved each other so. One nymph did
weep
To think that Jove in careless mood forgot
To make a man for her whom she could love;
Then all the louder cried in grief that not
E'en one loved her, and often she did rove
Among them only to display her charms,
And to be loved awhile and then deceived,
Then fly in self-defense to other arms.
Small wonder that her trusting heart was grieved
To see that woman had what she desired—
That mortal own'd what her own heart required.

XXXV

Be just, Eternal Arbiter, she may
Surrender every issue—sacrifice
Each cherish'd wish. Returns as oft' repay
Old records kept each hour neutralize
A lady's yearnings, every day assail'd.
Earth closes nearer heaven when reward
Is render'd for intent—when those who've fail'd
Are taken to their Father and their Lord.
Reward her, Jove! Produce some simple swain
To soothe her fetter'd fancies evermore—
To be her confidant through joy and pain—
A loving, trusting friend on whom to pour
Her happiness and disappointment when
She longs to mingle in the haunts of men.

XXXVI

Thus while the breath of Notus wrought a
charm
On Gaea's cheek, and Rhea smiled in mirth
On Vesta's gentle sway, the golden balm
Of summer wore away; then on the earth
The biting frosts of autumn turn'd the leaves
To scarlet hues. Our hero's work increased
When cold drew near, for Lachesis thus weaves
Her mystic spell. The cotton, being fleeced,
Was pressed in many bales to send away
To clothe the freezing child, the toiling old,
To warm by night, to shield Aquillo's play
From weak and trembling limbs by day: for
cold
Would wreak strange havoc were it not for toil
Of strong and sturdy men who till the soil.

XXXVII

The line of wagons stretching out afar
O'er country roads toils to the crowded throngs
Of greedy men whose speculations are
The little springs that flow to greater wrongs.
The merry jesting of the men at work
Is but the harbinger, let us suppose,
Of happiness of those who never shirk
Their toil, when they have earn'd their sweet
repose.
Our hero rode upon his horse beside
His precious caravan. The manly smile
Of satisfaction show'd the thoughts of pride
He felt to view the fruits of labor,—while
A shadow comes! But what could cause him pain?
'Tis there to stay till he is home again.

XXXVIII

His thoughts e'en now went home beside the
flow'r
Whose fragrance was the very breath of life
To him. How would she spend each lonesome
hour?
His only separation from his wife
Brought pain such as he ne'er before did know.
She could not "teach the orphan boy to read,"
She could not "teach the orphan girl to sew,"
For none were near her now; but she would heed
The cries of birds, and beasts, and men, and be
A gentle angel that would ease their pain.
He knew her lonely by herself, for she
Had learn'd to love him so; but ne'er again
In life, he made a firm resolve, would they
Be separated for a single day.

XXXIX

Soon winter came, and Boreas drove away,
With cold disdain, the verdant natural smile
From Gaea's cheek; but warmth of spring did
stay
Upon one lovely face to comfort while
All else was cold. When summer was desired,
Our hero found the warmth of love from out
The torrid zone in kisses, which inspire
A superhuman love, and banish doubt
And all the green and sickly envy far
To Pluto's grisly realm, where Proserpine
Did curse her lot beneath some Stygian star,
And on the banks of Acheron did pine
For Jupiter's Olympus, high above,
Where Hebe served the soothing draughts of love.

CANTO THE SECOND

I

The seasons came and went with stealthy tread,
But yet not slow, for follow'd they so fast
Until quadruplicated all did wed,
And first came mated close beside the last,
And last came rushing on upon the first,
So many pass'd before they could be miss'd.
At times our hero and his wife rehearsed
Their former days when often she did twist
In jest a garland for his humble pate.
He thought it undeserved, yet one has said,
"They also serve who only stand and wait."
Was this the only gem that crown'd his head?
Was this the only service he could claim—
The only reason she should love his name?

II

Age brought few changes to the beings who
Have form'd this dream: our hero's tread was
slow,
His shoulders droop'd with years, perchance his
view
Was somewhat dim'd—he fail'd to see the snow
That turn'd to silver tresses that were brown
Some forty years ago; the veil of love
Through which he look'd had never fallen down,
And wrinkles on her face could not remove
The dimples he had loved since they were young.
Men must grow old, but by an ancient truth
It has been proved (so antique minstrels sung)
With happy heart a man is still a youth,
And all the milestones of the years gone by
Are seen by friends, but hidden from his eye.

III

Those pleasant rowings on the stream were past,
Those rambles through the woods and caves
were o'er:
The burning of the sun, the mountain blast
Had left their marks upon the temple door.
The forests where our hero often trod
Were being cut to earth by mortal hand
To send away; and those who bought the sod
Were speculating on the price of land.
The elves and satyrs that had play'd around
Had sought seclusion in some new abode,
As once the savage who had own'd the ground,
Not yielding to the hated white man's God,
Had found new lands far in the golden west,
Where he could hoard the secrets of his breast.

IV

New caves were seen where none had been before,
And people walk'd where once there trod the
beast,
And from these shafts they brought the precious
ore
That went to fill the coffers of the East.
The jetty diamonds in a mighty mound
Some two miles northward, and upon the west,
The red rocks holding tons of iron were found;
And many came hot-headed to their quest.
O! God in heaven, why could'st not reserve
(Pardon, Lord, a last complaining sigh!)
This for our hero—did he not deserve
A final rest beneath a peaceful sky?
He must have thought such things, alas, but still
He bow'd his acquiescence to God's will.

V

To work these mines there came a class of men
 Rear'd 'neath the balmy skies of Italy;
 And in their minds, perchance, they lived again
 Those days beneath the walls of Rome. I see,
 Methinks, their footprints scatter'd o'er the
 road

Where once a Caesar's legions marched away,
 Or Cicero implored some Latin god

To vanquish Cataline. Oh, rue the day,
 Fair Italy, that witness'd such a fall

Of manhood from those master minds of yore:
 'Tis sad that history should yet recall

The glitter of thy glory long since o'er.
 Now coldly banish'd to some foreign strand
 Those who disgrace the prestige of their land.

VI

Upon the lawn at eve our hero sat

Beside the woman who still held his heart
 Within her hand. Upon his head no hat

Nor hair was seen. The pangs of Cupid's
 dart

Had ceased to thrill with mingled pain and joy,

And turn to fire all the blood of youth
 That surged within him when he was a boy;

But still he loved, and still he felt, in truth,
 Each varied form of soothing joy and pride

That permeated all his being then,

When he was but a youth, and she his bride

Upon his knee. And still his queen did win
 The homage she had claim'd within this grove
 When first she felt the rapture of his love.

VII

The stream below was his—the mountain air
He breathed; no bold intruder dared to claim
His farm ; some fairies loved to linger there
And play, and laugh, and run about the same
As they had done long years ago. So why
Should he disturb his mind when others trod
In bold defiance 'neath the lovely sky
That stretch'd above his house and cherish'd sod
And built their homes and lived? Were they not
men
The same as he? He had no right to try
To hate them now, and perpetrate a sin,
To live alone, in solitude to die.
When young he'd liked to roam around and see,
And chase the "mountain nymph—sweet Liber-
ty."

VIII

He stay'd at home, nor dared he harbor doubt
And envy at what others did. He knew
And loved each nook and corner thereabout.
Near by his rustic seat a willow grew,
Whose drooping branches spread above a stone
Which mark'd a grave that held the small
remains
Of one whom they had loved. The baby gone,
Call'd by the melodies of angels' strains
Above long years before, had come to them
When they were young. He proved to be the
last.
Since God recall'd the infant boy to him,
Upon this one sweet mem'ry of the past
Their minds would dwell, for bury'd 'neath this tree
Lay dead all hopes for their posterity.

IX

Now while our hero dream'd about the past,
 His wife sat close beside him there and mused.
 The times were changing now so very fast
 That they oft' found themselves somewhat
 confused.
 Before so many things had come to pass,
 When he was but a boy, his wife so dear
 Was just a dainty, little, blushing lass,
 Oft' in imagination they would rear
 Some strange, fantastic dreams of wealth and pow'r;
 But they had proved like poppies spread at last,
 And left their fragrance on the broken bow'r,
 And wither'd in the mountain snow and blast;
 But since the leaves had fallen at their feet,
 They'd lived their lives a thousand times more
 sweet.

X

One dismal, dreary night when darkness came
 Upon them with its gloom (unholy mist
 Had gather'd 'round the mansion to defame
 The harmony), their ears in awe did list'
 The mystical confusion in the grove—
 A mournful, dreamy sound play'd by the wind
 Upon the natural instruments above
 Their heads. The threat'ning atmosphere con-
 fined
 Indoors the quaint old couple dwelling there
 Alone; and blackest clouds of night, in vogue
 Of Nature's coverings to shield despair,
 Blown by the currents, play'd the sneaking
 rogue
 To hide the eyes of angels, bright above,
 From all the lovely spots within the grove.

XI

But hark! there breaks a drear and lurid light
As though some single star did penetrate,
In wild ambition now the gloomy night
Below, and then did boldly instigate
A spreading brightness thrown both far and wide
Upon the heath around. The mind of whom
In all its wickedness did thus betide
Upon some crooked scheme to pierce the gloom,
And call the senses from the lulling strain
To sterner thoughts? What evil imp of hell
Had rush'd to earth to cause some mortal pain?
Perchance it was some angel wishing well
That from the crystal spheres did lightly bend,
With holy mien, to mould a mystic end.

XII

Ye gods above! can I now see aright,
Or has the spell of dreams estranged my mind
From truth? From yonder mansion flows the
light
Of crackling fire that mingles with the wind,
And dashes 'midst the darkness high o'erhead.
The night above its blackness open'd wide,
While on its flames the monster madly fed,
As though all earthly horrors it defied.
Then Ae-a-cus, to do his master's will,
Raised high his great right arm in strength o'er
all,
Now summon'd he his pow'r while holding still,
Then with one crash he grounded all the wall,
But step'd back strangled from the sparks that
dash
In bold defiance on his fiendish lash.

XIII

Our stricken hero, now with head bow'd low,
Sat on his rustic bench at break of morn
And sadly gazed upon the ruins below—
Spread at his feet. Upon his face forlorn,
Deployed in saddest hues, the telling prints
Of age and marks of present grief combined
To form a sorrowful coincidence
Of pictures printed on a troubled mind.
Our heroine discover'd then at last
That time had wrought some changes in the
man,
And through the great expanse of marriage past
Turn'd back again to youth, and then began,
In her sweet way, her mission to fulfill,
And banish vain affliction from the will:

XIV

“Dear Heart,” she said, “why such despondent
mien
When Honor lives? I know it will be hard
To seek a new abode, before unseen,
But do it for my sake, and for our God
Who doeth all things well. He form'd us two
To comfort, solace, to uplift, to love
Each one the other. Why not cease to rue
Thy heavy loss, and lift thy mind above
Regret? I will be thine forevermore
Just as in years that roll'd away since I,
With trusting heart, left all I loved of yore
To live in happiness—in peace to die.
I know you love to linger near the grave
Which holds the precious infant that God gave.

XV

“All this affection we have shown is real,
And is not selfish love; it doth uplift,
And hath not weaken'd us. The grief I feel
Will go to come no more: for from the gift
Of life (since view'd but through the tinted veil
Of love that gives my virtues gilded hues,
And causes every fault of mine to pale
To nothingness) my trusting heart does choose
To suck the honey'd drops of bliss. So let
Us seek the fair 'Blue Rose' beyond the deep,
Wild waves that bind our land, and there forget
That we are homeless; let us learn to sleep
Beneath the firmness of some wall whose fame
Will long outlive its antique builder's name.

XVI

“My dear, my dreamer of a dreamy clime,
In whose weird fancies I so love to live,
Let's rear air castles with their halls sublime
And search the haunts of buried nations, give
Our fetter'd spirits room to soar on high
Upon each European snow-cap'd peak
Of grandeur and renown; let's travel by
The monuments of men, where mortals seek
To live in stone when dead in flesh; and gaze
On what the world at large has done while
we,
Wrap'd in oblivion to passing days,
Have loved alone in deep intensity;
Then, from the grasping world of greedy strife,
Back to the glories of a peaceful life.”

XVII

Now while he heard, our hero dream'd once more
Of former days. His thoughts were raised
above
His discontent; and as he sat before
The woman who had reign'd as queen of love
Back from the time of youth, from his control
His sentiments, removed in sweet content
And happiness, dwelt on the purest soul
That ever lived. And had her mind thus bent
Our hero from his own? The rapid flood
Of inspiration often forced its sway
Upon the other's inmost thought; and blood
Of one seem'd to infuse the two, for they
Thus heart to heart—as one flesh and one bone
Had been 'till each had ceased to live alone.

XVIII

From long ago with them to think had been
To act. They left the solitude of years
Almost without regret, and with the men
That in the past were reckon'd as their peers
They mix'd again. The world was not the same
As it had been: the stars from overhead
In many-color'd brilliancies now came
(So it did seem) to earthly homes and shed
Their lights as bright as day to guide the feet
Of men; and transportation cars now sped,
Devoid of steam, on swiftly down each street;
While tangled in a puzzling web o'erhead
Were wires that flash'd along with speed of
thought
The story of new wonders men had wrought.

XIX

Through labyrinths of cities great and small
They travel'd on, and marvel'd at the show
Of wealth. The bustling traffic did appall
Their ears, for years they'd lived within the slow
And peaceful land of dreams. At times they
thought
That in their quaintness they were just as new
To modern folk as they to them. Yet caught
In all this whirl of life, there were but few
Who noticed them. True, man did love the smile
Of woman yet, and still loved liberty,
But both he found upon the dollar while
He strove for it, but few in quest did see
The face or name. And was there man so just
Who stop'd to act the words "In God We Trust?"

XX

At last they reach'd a city on the coast.
Once many years ago our hero came
To this same place, but now the mighty host
Of men that throng'd the streets was not the
same.
Great changes mark'd each old, familiar spot:
Where once the buildings not so high had stood,
They seem'd to touch the clouds, and they were not
Like those old structures that were made of
wood,—
With steel and stone the modern architect
Had wrought this change. This city by the sea
Had many wharves and docks. In this respect
'Twas more than great. And here the ships
could flee
In safety at the sign of coming storm,
And hide within the harbor safe from harm.

XXI

The wharves were heavy with their costly freight,
Huge boxes in confusion lay around,
And many men could scarcely lift the weight
Of precious bales of goods that strew'd the
ground.

Bare, brawny backs and arms like whipcords
strain'd

Assay'd the task; but as each heavy case
Was moved away a thousand more remain'd,
While more were being brought to take its place.
The ocean steamships anchor'd on the piers,
Some being fill'd, some empty'd while they lay
At rest, some new, while some had sail'd for years,
Some fill'd their holds with grain to take away:
All show'd the thrift of man, a building thrift
That tends to benefit and to uplift.

XXII

Beside one pier a monster vessel lay
Much larger than the rest, but trim and new,
And graceful in her majesty. The way
Before her was to ports abroad. A few
More travelers were rushing to her ere
She sail'd. Among the last to get aboard
This ship, our hero and his wife appear.
In haste they reach the deck, and, turning
toward

The shore, survey the multitude below.

The cables loosed, the vessel moves away;
At first she steams in stately grace quite slow,
But soon her bow has churn'd the waves to spray;
And as they pass the ancient lighthouse by,
Our hero faces landward with a sigh.

XXIII

That afternoon they sat upon the deck
And watch'd the sea. The summer sky was
clear,
And far behind, a disappearing speck,
The ancient lighthouse stood. The water near
Was turbulent and dashed to fury by
The screws that drove the ship: it foam'd, and
rose,
And seethed, and hiss'd, and yet it seem'd to die
And mix with calmer waters for repose.
The sea itself was calm: a gentle wind
Was just enough to place a foamy crest
Upon each wave; the salty breeze—the kind
That cools, invigorates, and makes the chest
Expand—blew o'er the deck, and seem'd to be
A balm that soothed the eyes that watch'd the
sea.

XXIV

Far in the west a shining ball of red—
The sun in heaven—throws its golden rays
Upon the sea, and on each wave crest's head
A crimson particle of glory plays
And sparkles on the foam. The sun, not far
Above the ocean, lower'd to mix with brine
And turn the sea to fire. A burning bar
Of splendor fell upon the waves to shine
From sun to ship, like some fair path above,
From God to man, from man to God again,
Like Jacob's ladder from the Throne of Love.
The sun touch'd sea, while on the heaving main
Of water bright, the foam-cap'd waves still rose
And fell again back to the sea's repose.

XXV

Our hero in his youth had loved the foam,
And now, beside the angel of his life,
He sat in peace, and gazed, nor dream'd of home;
The pangs that tore his bosom ceased their
 strife,
And gave their place to rest and sweet content.
He look'd upon the sun, now sinking low
Beneath the glowing sea; and as it went,
The brilliant colors seem'd to ebb and flow
To suit his fancies. For a little while
It hesitated just upon the verge,
As though 'twere loath to leave our hero's smile,
And let its light beneath the waves immerge:
It linger'd thus a moment in his sight,
Then sank beneath the sea, and it was night.

WHITE ROSE

*To my little companion, the
White Rose herself,
I dedicate this poem.*

*WHITE ROSE

PROEM

Whilom I seek thy shrine, elusive muse,
Within some shady, cool, sequester'd glade;
In ignorance I hesitate, afraid
For fear my clumsy fingers may abuse
The harp which fitter hands might better use;
With humble heart I meekly have assay'd
A task which wiser heads might shun dismay'd.
But take my lonely talent, should'st thou choose
To frame my lowly lay to thy design,
Much honor'd shall I feel myself to be,
And to thy guidance gladly will resign
The words my tongue can utter but from thee.
The better parts herein contain'd are thine,
The discords form'd will come alone from me.

* The white rose is the flower of one of the large, national, college fraternities. The emblem, or badge of membership, of this fraternity is made in the shape of a five pointed star, having various mysterious symbols and Greek letters upon its crest.

By a strange coincidence the white rose is also the flower of a popular, national, college sorority. Its members wear a diamond shaped pin, bearing the picture of a dagger and a Greek inscription.

This romance deals with a member of each of these organizations.

HOPES

I

White Rose, of Nature's plan divinely fair,
So spotless o'er the foliage beneath,
Thy velvet petals kiss the morning air,
And purify the atmosphere we breathe;
Thy bud expanding forms the bloom complete.
It lingers thus in purity until
The wither'd petals fall beneath our feet,
But leave the sweet aroma fragrant still.

II

A star arose and shone upon a youth;
He fix'd his gaze upon the golden span,
And read inscroll'd thereon the words of truth
That help'd the boy become a better man.
A maiden wore an emblem on her breast,
A dagger form'd and Grecian script design'd;
She loved the mysteries upon the crest,
For they were pure and sacred like her mind.

III

Fantastic fancies sway the tender years,
And holy fetters bind the sacred bands
Whose members share each others' joys and fears
With solemn joinings of fraternal hands.
Long years ago the youth and maiden, both
In mutual admiration whiled their time,
Until the maid was led to plight her troth
In words that shamed the sentiments of rhyme.

IV

The twain were stir'd by Love's eternal sway—
Wild pulsings of sensation in its flight,
Were warm'd of Phoebus' countenance by day,
And softly kiss'd of Cynthia by night.
They wander'd through the woodland hand in
hand,
And worded all the dreamings of the mind;
Such phrases as but Love can understand
Were softly wafted on the gentle wind.

V

They rested close beside a placid lake
Whose shimmering surface show'd the clouds
above;
There breathed such cooling zephyrs as awake
The slumbering pulses of the purest love.
Her tresses unconfined were chestnut brown,
And wreathed her animated face aglow,
Then falling softly in abandon down,
Were pillow'd on her snowy arms below.

VI

Her eyes (those eyes!) were fathomless: so deep—
So true—so loving, yet they look'd so bland,
And underneath the coloring would creep
A meaning which no brain could understand.
Her lips were like the rising hues of morn,
All crimson'd o'er with color's red'ning rush,
And at their rosy points anon were born
The dimples there that heralded her blush.

VII

The two were shielded then by Aphrodite,
And winged Cupids bore them high above,
And sat them down upon the dizzy height
Within the misty realms of godly Jove.
Would they might linger thus forever near
The holy summit of Olympus' shrine,
Unmindful of the nymphs as they appear
To fill their empty'd goblets more of wine;

VIII

Would they might feel their beings slowly
change,
And fluff the mortal weight from off the soul,
And soar to airy heights divinely strange
Above the human bound'ries of control.
Alas! the human fancies must resign
That higher plane above the mortal will,
Nor dare assail the Infinite Design,
For while a human lives, a human still.

IX

'Tis sad that souls which mingled in accord,
That beings clinging fondly heart to heart,
And minds that drank the rapture of each word
The other spoke anon were forced to part.
True, they would be united once again,
United here on earth to part no more,
Beneath the throne of Love's fantastic reign
In bonds more binding than they ever bore.

X

So thought—so hoped—so pray'd this blinded
pair
For love united evermore to dwell
In realms enchanted—barren of despair,
Encompass'd thereabout with mystic spell
Of soft Aeolian music all in tune,
Of babbling brooks forever winding on,
Of atmosphere as balmy as of June,
And grassy plots to seat themselves upon.

XI

But dreams are strange—far stranger when unreal
Than when o'ershadow'd by the veil of truth,—
And heart dreams must most vividly appeal
Forever to the gentle mind of youth.
Ah, then there were the sighs, somewhat sup-
press'd,
A briny tear that glisten'd in the eye,
The heaving burnings stifled in the breast,
The gentle pressure, then a long goodbye.

SHADOWS

XII

There was a tie whose sweetness did allure
Diverging hearts together for repose,
By Nature's fingers deftly plan'd, and pure,
Within the snowy petals of the Rose.
So when the higher fates became unkind,
And bore the youth beyond the maid's control,
He left his love to linger in her mind,
And wore her image printed on his soul.

XIII

At even' he saw the moon within the sky,
Her beams were radiant with a newer light,
He drew therefrom the echoes of a sigh—
A sigh of one who long'd for him tonight;
He bow'd his head to Luna's ancient shrine,
Where shone her crystal sphere so high above,
And bade her purest holiness to shine
Upon the distant idol of his love,

XIV

To guide her footsteps where they ought to tread,
To light her pathway while the night was dim,
To bear unto her bosom as she sped,
Some thoughts to bud and blossom there for him;
But while he thought of her so far away,
Unheeded were the pitfalls where he trod,—
Nor raised his voice in suppliance to pray
Protection from the holy throne of God.

XV

For her alone the blessings were implored,
Nor dream'd himself neglected by the prayer;
But fell he unassisted of the Lord
To mingle in the depths of cold despair.
Athwart his path the darkest shadows crept,
And turn'd him from his old and trodden way,
And dormant in the darkness there he slept,
A pity'd object stricken with dismay.

XVI

Nor suffer'd he alone in his unrest,
For tears bedim'd a pretty maiden's eyes,—
She bore her sorrows heavily oppress'd,
And innocent became the sacrifice:
For still she loved, nor stifled her desire
To reap the harvest which her hands had sown,
Nor threw she Lethe's waters on the fire
Ignited from his bosom in her own.

XVII

But while he lay in sickness overlong,
Her heart beat true in hopes and true in love.
'Twas through her prayers he felt himself grow
strong,
And gave the thanks to her and One above.
Then rose he from his illness turn'd a man—
Full grown in years, robust in body, strong:
From boyhood borne across dividing span,
And left to choose his path of right or wrong.

STRUGGLES

XVIII

Now while reluctantly he linger'd there,
A vision bathed in purity arose,
Pass'd slowly through the stillness of the air,
And form'd the spotless petals of the Rose.
He gazed upon the flower there awhile,
And watch'd it slowly vanish into mist;
Then spread upon his face there came a smile
That few who knew him managed to resist.

XIX

Within that smile Resolve was born anew,
A truer hope was forming in the mind,
And gain'd the man a purpose from the view
To blot out all the annals left behind.
The world he faced he found unreal and cold,
Unlike the fire burning in his heart,
Nor swerved he from his purpose to behold
That there his hands must play a minor part.

XX

All soldiers cannot lead the hosts in war,
Nor shall all men be eminent in state,
All angels may not light the morning star,
And few men born are destined to be great:
The generals must have privates to command,
And artisans their thrift to nations give,
The choir maketh even heaven grand,
Below some men do scarcely more than live.

XXI

The man whose tale has form'd my lowly lay
Soar'd not to dizzy heights of things achieved,
Nor whiled his time in indolent delay—
Well satisfy'd, awaiting things conceived;
But rather now to earn his daily bread
Among the working class he learn'd a trade,
And other than an idle drone, instead
He faced the world respected—unafraid.

XXII

His toil he found was other than of ease—
His labors arduous—his hours long—
The world exacting—ever hard to please,
Beset with pitfalls and o'erspread with wrong;
The evil seem'd to thrive, the just to fail,
The poor grew poorer and were much oppress'd,
The rich, unmindful of the hungrys' wail,
Were gormandizing on the very best.

XXIII

He saw these things but dared not question why
The evil prosper'd while the worthy fell;
His heart in pity heaved a broken sigh,
And Reason said, "God doeth all things well."
So toil'd he in the ranks of those oppress'd,
A target for the adverse slings of Fate,
Nor harbor'd he resentment in his breast,
Nor was his mind embitter'd by his hate.

XXIV

A purpose lurk'd beneath his placid smile,
A purpose to surmount and to achieve:
To climb above the lower strata while
He shuffled from the web the Fates did weave.
Just Fortune, bending, smiled upon the man
Who chose to live his life in mild content,
For though he labor'd as when he began,
His work seem'd lighten'd by his temperament.

XXV

Small wonder that his purpose should succeed,
And he should solve the problems of each day
With ease that brought him envy'd looks indeed
From those who watch'd the trending of his
way;
But one who watch'd no envy'd malice bore,
A maiden gazed upon him from afar,
And look'd but to admire more and more
With love an evil world could never mar.

XXVI

Her shining eyes were stars to guide his hope,
While she was all the prize for which he strove,
And by their light he found the strength to cope
With all, that he might merit more her love:
But though unworthy of her love, he knew
That it would crown his labors to the end,—
For she had proved a faithful maid, and true.
The better wife is gain'd from first a friend.

RECOMPENSE

XXVII

Unfold, White Rose, thy petals one by one,
And let them spread above the twain that stand,
United through thy purity, upon
The steps before an altar hand in hand.
The holy man of God was speaking there
To merge these two young lives in sweet accord,
While gather'd 'round and gazing on them were
Their mutual friends to hear the joining word.

XXVIII

The maid so pure seem'd fairer than before,
So slight and lithe she held her graceful pose,
More beautiful because the dress she wore
Was spotless like the petals of the Rose.
A Rose herself, she seem'd to purify
The very holy place in which she stood,
While through each cheek, below a deep brown
eye,
Was seen the crimson pulsing of her blood.

XXIX

The service finish'd, when they turn'd to go,
With music sounding softly in their rear,
He whisper'd something in her ear so low
That no one of those gather'd there might hear.
She turn'd, and smiled, and spoke a loving word—
The first word to her husband from his wife,
And more than bless'd of God was he that heard,
And knew her voice would comfort him through
life.

L'ENVOY

A woman held an infant on her breast,
A child most beautifully form'd, and fair,
To claim her truest love and deepest care;
The babe so gently fondled and caress'd
Seem'd satisfy'd to be forever press'd
Above its mother's heart. Beside her chair
Her husband stood, and gazed upon her there,
And thought himself most bountifully bless'd.
The loving picture form'd a pretty sight,
The mother and her child in sweet repose.
Her smile was beaming, radiantly bright;
Her grace that permeated every pose
Was born of Purity. His fancy's flight
Had named her long ago his own White Rose.

SHORT POEMS

THE NEW YEAR

Ring out, each gladsome New Year bell,
Thy tones the letters clearly tell,
Thy letters join'd together spell
The name of God.

Each ringing, singing monotone
Resounds below, and then is gone
Above unto the sacred zone
Of heaven's abode.

Ring out, ye bells, in sacred chime,
Your melodies revert sublime,
And tell the world that Father Time
Has turn'd a page.
The world would yet a moment hold
In memory unto the old,
But turns in hope it may behold
A better age.

The Horologue of Time has smote
The clock of ages with a note
Which ye, its echoes, only quote
Within your spires.

And man on earth—a lowly thing—
Must requiems of praises sing,
And yet the recompense may bring
His heart's desires.

So ring, ye bells, your notes appear
As harbingers to greet the year,
And bring the mind of mortal cheer,
And bid him love;
For though your tongues by man were made,
And though your price by man was paid,
The messages you have convey'd
Are from above.

All praise to God whose message tells
Itself within the chiming bells,
And nearer—clearer—sweetly swells
 Across the land:
For God hath made within a day
A mortal moulded out of clay,
And held him subject to His sway,
 Within His hand.

The bells, O Lord, are thine to ring,
And thine are all the throats that sing,
The world is thine to spin and swing,
 And to preserve.
The melodies, so rich and rare,
From bell and throat upon the air,
But tell thee, God, from everywhere,
 Thy people serve.

TO A FRATERNITY PIN

Fair Emblem that I love so well,
A fitting home thy last repose!
Would thou could'st speak, perchance to tell
Some secrets to the dainty Rose,
So near whose heart thou, worn of late,
Should'st know the thoughts that animate.

Each mystery upon thy crest
I know and love, for they are mine.
If thou can'st read the maiden's breast,
Hold fast her secrets as if thine:
Should'st thou betray a maid so pure,
I would thy ownership abjure.

Now whisper to her every morn—
Remind her of one far away
Whose thoughts will be where thou art worn,
Whose mind is suppliant to thy sway:
Then thou as always shalt fulfill
A mission pleasing to my will.

Then once each day it would be meet
To claim just one sweet call for me,
And cause the heart below to beat
With one pulsation all for me.
Too much perchance to claim from one
Whose thoughts in nobler channels run.

Although so cold, appreciate
The honor that she does to wear
And love a thing inanimate,
Unfit in value to compare
With her own heart; and yet design'd
Thou art as pure as is her mind.

Now bind thyself unto my heart
So that at least it may remain
Forever near her when we part,
And nearer when I come again:
Invisible there let it be,
Sometimes to speak a word for me.

Will she forget when I am gone—
When miles shall part us, as of yore?
Will dew drops on the flow'rs at morn
Still sparkle as they did before?
Yes, they will sparkle just the same,
And she will sometimes call my name.

Five Pointed Star, a long farewell!
All words seem idle as they fall,
For tongue of mortal cannot tell
Sweet memories I yet recall.
How shall I dare to wear thee more
Since worn by one I so adore?

AMBITION

Revered Ambition, parasite of man,
Shall praise or censure be thy just reward?
As agitator in the earthly span
Thou can'st not be a whisper from the Lord.

Thou worship'd passion, nurtured by the brain,
How often is thine inspiration used
To further public weal; for private gain
More often art thou ruthlessly abused.

Now whence thy fascinating thralldom springs?
I dare gainsay thy descent from above.
What selfish passion fan'd with holy wings
Is generated from the throne of Love?

Nor comest thou from o'er the great divide—
From out the fallen angels' dread abode,
For, coming whence the evil ones abide,
Thy very advent were accursed of God.

Thou art a dual thing of mystic birth:
A constant inward strife of wrong with right,
In which at times the good prevails through worth,
At other times the evil rules by might.

Man found thee like a worm amid the dust,
And took thee to his breast an abject thing;
A full grown reptile venomous thou must
Reward thy benefactor with a sting.

The favor'd sycophant, beneath thy sway,
Can scarce conceive his glories gone awry,
And tongues that sing "Hosanna" but today
Tomorrow morn will hurl their "Crucify!"

Earth's panorama vividly deploy'd,
Abounding with its despots and their slaves,
A fairer picture would be but devoid
Its dismal background of untimely graves.

And yet were pow'rs the brain cannot conceive,
The total strength of all the Titans, mine,
I cannot bring my fancies to believe
I'd drag thee from the splendor of thy shrine.

For what could man have done devoid of thee—
Thy spark to light his bosom with desire
To blaze another trail for history,
And mark an epoch by his beacon fire?

Or what might we become were thou to die?
Our very future would be swept away,
And fallen man degenerated lie
Unmindful of his solitary sway.

Since all the annals of the past are thine,
And all our future hopes on thee repose,
'Tis worse than folly lightly to consign
The heritage of man to whence it rose.

MY SEA GIRL ISLE

I dream'd I stood upon a sea girt isle,
The world lay distant many miles afar;
I gazed to heaven's canopy, the while
Ascended there and gleam'd a wondrous star;
I watch'd the movements of the mystic sphere:
It came unto the isle I know not how,
Possess'd of life it was, approaching near,
Methought, my love, the wondrous star wert
thou.

I waked me with the morn somewhat amiss,
Beheld my vapor'd paradise no more;
And thou did'st vanish with my dream of bliss,—
Perchance enraptured on its distant shore.
My absent love, thou art so far away,
Mayhap upon some island of the sea.
But do thy thoughts awaken'd hither stray?
And dost thou seek thy couch and dream of me?

Come go, my love, and by the sea breeze sped,
Our barque will bear us safely o'er the tide;
Upon my sea girt isle a feast is spread
By nymphs and fairies both who there abide.
Together we shall dwell in love alone,
Beside the bubbling waters of a spring;
And I shall rear within this grove a throne,
And rule with thee, my queen, and be thy king.

THE PRICE OF GLORY

(AT GETTYSBURG)

Past noon on the third day of battle
Two armies had struggled in vain,
Yet musketry kept up a rattle
With cannons' sonorous refrain;
The crash of the volleys resounded;
The bursting of shells in the air,
With deaf'ning concussion confounded
The pitiful wail of despair.

A lull supercedes cannonading,
When soldiers in blue on the height
Behold, through a rift in the shading,
Their enemies massing in might.
The guns fill'd with missiles are waiting
To sweep the approaches below;
The gunners, impatiently hating,
Are eager to fire on the foe.

The men clad in gray over yonder,
Well form'd like a host on review,
Advancing, are shortly to squander
Their lives in a charge on the blue;
In order, with little commotion,
The Southerners sweep to the fray,
With valor inborn of devotion,
And courage devoid of dismay.

The Northmen, above in the trenches,
Gaze forth with a tingle of thrill,
But stifle compassion that wrenches,
And level their muskets to kill.

The pageant, in splendor unfolding,
Approaches the foot of the slope,
From where the brave leaders, beholding,
Point up to the gateway of hope.

Then peal the reports as of thunder
From cannon in awful recoil;
And shells, in their bursting asunder,
Spread death on the slippery soil.
The lines that are scatter'd and bleeding
Sublime in their valor appear,
Press onward to duty, unheeding
The storm, and reply with a cheer.

Again, and again up above them
The flames leap and flash from the height;
The shouts from the on-coming prove them
Disdainful to monsters of might.
Long lanes through the lines of the living
Are strewn with the heaps of the dead,
The wounded—the dying are giving
Their blood to the turfs on their bed.

The gaps through the columns in motion
Are closed at the word of command.
The tide, like the surge of the ocean,
Rolls on to the rise of the land.
The officers brandish their sabres,
And lead to the slippery hill;
The soldiers give heart to their labors,
And charge with a zest and a will.

The grape and the cannister blending
With musketry balls in their sweep
Through infantry gallantly wending
Its way up the slippery steep,

The crush of the leaden destruction,
The shrieking and bursting of shell,
All mingle—a livid production
Why war has been liken'd to hell.

The half of the on-coming alter
Their course from the point of attack—
Are thrown in confusion, and falter—
Recede from the hill and roll back.
The others, in motion unceasing,
Press on to their triumph—or fall;
The numbers opposing increasing,
Their own all the while growing small.

At last they are there penetrating
The coils that encircle the crest—
Receive at the summit awaiting
Discharges point blank at the breast.
From all promontories surrounding,
And from both the left and the right
The Federals, in numbers abounding,
Rush forward to join in the fight.

The Southerners, blinded with passion,
And drunk with the sulphurous air,
Are wielding their arms in a fashion
Infused by the strength of despair:
But passion is all unavailing,
The strength of despair is in vain,
Grown small are the numbers assailing
Deprived of their comrades—the slain.

The muskets like bludgeons are wielded,
With hissing of steel against steel,

The parry is given and shielded,
And wounds are received—not to heal.
The victory turns to the stronger,
And death is the goal of the brave:
Their portion will linger the longer—
The glory that circles their grave.

But mortal endeavor must falter—
No longer can courage endure;
The sacrifice laid on the altar
Is stamp'd by Posterity—"Pure."
But oh, for the lives that were wasted—
Those knights of the North and the South;
And oh, for the hope that was blasted
And crushed at the cannon's red mouth.

But far more pathetic—appealing
(The picture of many in one),
A mother, as evening is stealing
The daylight, awaiting her son:
A footfall—a neighbor—words spoken,
The lingering hope in her breast
Is crush'd, and her spirit is broken—
Her darling has gone to his rest.

LOVE'S LABOR

It were a lithesome sprite, methought,
That forced me to my knees;
My senses all were overwrought,
My heart was ill at ease;
Upon the shadow'd mantle stood
The author of my woe—
A chubby, little, dimpled god
Behind his silver bow.

From out the quiver on his back
He drew a slender dart,
And taking aim, let fly, alack,
And struck my pulsing heart.
I felt a sting a-kin to pain
Go coursing through my blood;
I would not, though it burn'd each vein,
Avoid it, if I could:

Because the arrow in its flight
Had left a tiny speck,
'Twas small, but show'd against the white
Upon my loved one's neck;
It was enough, for then the maid,
Of late above the spell,
A moment trembled, quite dismay'd,
Then on my bosom fell.

I felt her heart's impulsive throb,
And press'd her close to mine;
I heard the little, stifled sob
With which she did resign;
I felt a burning temple press'd

By her against my face;
I saw the storm beneath the breast
That rose to my embrace;

I saw the dimpled god of love
Arise on snowy wing,
And circle slowly up above,—
Forsooth, a graceful thing;
And as he started to depart,
This son of Aphrodite,
He read the thanks within my heart,
And vanish'd from my sight.

SOLICITUDE MISPLACED

Why, heavenly goddess—arbitress divine,
Must modern bards subject the honor'd muse
To harp of squalid poverty?—resign
The primal heritage of verse?—confuse
The woes of man with themes they ought to
use?

Do pangs of pity grip the singing heart
Of late, and make the melodies abuse
The pow'rs that be?—or is the generous part
Assumed to create interest in a fallen art?

The trend of rhythmic thought is passing strange,
And fairly bristles with the thorns of hate,—
Regrets the recent, consequential change—
The wanton fall of man from high estate.
Wherefrom may man's descent be traced of late?
Do those who swelter through the day in grime
About the board at night deplore their fate?
Do those who feed their families with their "time"
Deserve—desire the deep solicitude of rhyme?

Methinks some sympathetic lines misplaced:
The rabble whom they touch is better fed—
Is better housed and clothed—is less debased,
Than heretofore—is organized and led.
Now man may *choose* a place to lay his head;
No fetters hold him from the broader field.
The thrall'dom of the serf is long since dead!
Expansive are the heights, and unconcealed
The paths, where man may scale to summits
unrevealed.

FAIRY CASTLES BY THE SEA

As the sun was slowly sinking, sat I by a fountain
blinking—

Musing—dreaming, in my fancies, of the days
of long ago.

Overhead the trees were swaying, all their grace-
ful rhythm linking

To my thoughts as sat I thinking by that
fountain's overflow.

And I gazed upon the ocean, with its ever restless
motion,

Feeling all the deep devotion of a dreamer for
the sea;

And I ponder'd on the fancies that were born with
every notion

In the most fantastic trances that had ever
come to me;

And I builded fairy castles fan'd with breezes
from the sea.

Then the fountain, ever spraying—ever dancing
—ever playing,

Seem'd to mock my lonely feelings, and to stir
me with a start;

As I groped within my nature, undecided and
delaying,

Slowly pondering and weighing every feeling of
my heart,

All at once I saw a vision, beckoning as in deri-
sion,

Laughing at my indecision with a mirthful
laugh of glee:

While I gazed the face was glowing, smiling as in
recognition,

In its beauty plainly showing she had cogni-
zance of me—

Knew about my fairy castles fan'd with breezes
from the sea.

And, methought, I must be dreaming, as the
naiad's face a-gleaming

Smiled its greeting from the fountain in a
most fantastic way,

For the countenance so charming through the
misty spray was beaming

With a holiness so seeming to reflect the light of
day.

Sat I thus, amid my fancies, hanging on her very
glances,

Ignorant of all the chances that the vision held
for me;

Speaking not, nor even daring to profane the
mystic trances

Brought about by her appearing thus so fanci-
fully free—

Coming to my fairy castles fan'd with breezes
from the sea.

But the vision started speaking, saying, "Sir, I
came here seeking

Not this cold, disdainful welcome—not thy
vacant, icy stare:

I was told that thou wert lonely—that thy heart
was sore to breaking,

But I find thy silence piquing, and no welcome
in the air."

Thus I answer'd for her hearing, slightly tremb-
ling and fearing

That the elf was disappearing in the misting to
the lea:
"Welcome to thee, pretty maiden, to my dream-
land and the sharing
Of my lot, though heavy laden, 'twill be lighter,
love, with thee—
Welcome to my fairy castles fan'd with breezes
from the sea."

Hence I, stooping, reach'd and caught her, bore
her dripping from the water
To my seat beside the fountain, to my ancient
rustic chair,
To the shadows of my garden, there to dwell where
Fortune brought her:
There I loved her, there I taught her all my
sentiments to share;
There I gave her my caresses, felt her cheek and
touch'd her tresses,
Felt the love—the love that blesses all her
presence meant to me.
So I clothed the lovely woman in the softest silken
dresses,
For though now I knew her human, I prefer'd
that she should be
Garb'd to suit my fairy castles fan'd with
breezes from the sea.

Now we walk beside the pillars, in the shadows
of the willows,
Gaze upon the seething ocean, cap'd with foam
and dash'd in spray;
She is ever close beside me when we look upon the
billows

As the shade of evening mellows from the
splendor of the day;
She is ever near me lately, moving silently, sedately,
With a poise serenely stately, and a loving
smile for me;
I have ceased to feel so lonely, for her presence
helps me greatly;
I am living for her only, for her happiness since
she
Came to bless my fairy castles fan'd with breezes
from the sea.

DAWN

The stars withdraw their glimmer one by one.

Above, their brilliant flickerings so bright

Depart beyond the misty realms of sight.

A glowing blush to eastward has begun

To penetrate the overhanging dun;

Then with a rush the onward sweep of light

Rolls back the mantled canopies of Night,

And leaves a rosy pathway for the Sun.

There he arises from the great Beyond,

And smiles upon the meadows stretch'd away,

Where Nature touch'd the grass with magic

wand

And left her gems to catch each brilliant ray.

A bird o'erhead, in song divinely fond,

Is carolling his homage to the day.

PHILOMEL

I stood in solitude beside
A playful rivulet and heard
The gladsome carol of a bird.
His song was one of love and pride—
Of joyful fancies and of glee:
From careless bosom, freely sent,
His lay was wafted down to me,
And lull'd my heart with his content.

I gazed upon the babbling stream—
Its mossy bank, its gravel bed;
Then fast beside I laid my head
To rest in solitude—to dream
The visions such as dreamers love.
My eyes were on the swaying trees
That bow'd in rhythm up above,
And cool'd my forehead with their breeze.

How long I gazed I scarcely know.
My fancies gather'd, fairer hued
Than eye of mortal ever view'd.
My thoughts assumed a liquid flow,
Subconscious welling through my brain
In fantasies beyond control;
And yet they seem'd so fair I fain
Would have them linger in my soul.

I heard a voice divinely clear.
It reach'd me from I know not where,
It floated softly through the air,
And yet I knew the singer near.
I linger'd fondly on each note,
Enchanted, speechless in the spell.

Such songs come not from mortal throat:
In truth this must be Philomel!

I heard the fluttering of wings;
I saw a score of fairies spread
A silken carpet by my bed.
Yet they were but the underlings!
For came she here before my eyes,
And sang to me, with heaving breast,
A song that told of paradise,
And lull'd my fancies unto rest.

She touch'd me with her golden wand.
I slept, nor saw her disappear,
Perchance I dream'd she linger'd near
To soothe me with her tender hand.
I felt a kiss upon my brow.
It tingled all my blood. I spoke
To seal my homage with a vow,
And then from reveries awoke.

The trees were swaying overhead.
My ear was strain'd to catch some word
In echo that my fancies heard.
The bird was singing now instead.
I heard his song but would not try
To rid my spirit of the spell,
Nor could I help but feel that I
Was kiss'd that day by Philomel.

REVERIE

Hold me, darling, close unto thee while the shades
of evening fall,
Softly ebbing—softly flowing—casting shadows
on the wall.

While the crystal spheres surround us, tuning
harmonies to love,
Angels with their virgin voices form the choir up
above.

When I press thy heaving bosom, with thy puls-
ing heart below,
I can feel the sweet sensaton of thy sentiments in
flow.

While thy loving arms surround me and thy red
lips press to mine,
In each kiss of deep devotion mix'd are drops of
eglantine.

Sighs that soothe me with their sweetness gently
lull my heart to rest;
Eyes that hold me, rapt in dreamland, waft me
with the ever bless'd.

In each movement, in each whisper, pure and
sacred now, I wis,
Mingles all thy holy being—lightly tingles all my
bliss.

Then my eyes shall close in pleasure, thankful for
the needed rest,
While my head does pillow gently on thy warm
and snowy breast.

Slumber, such as rests the weary, holds me in a
fond embrace—
Soothes the senses—smooths the wrinkles—lays
her veil upon my face.

Then the dreams come, fair, alluring dreams the
brain can scarce conceive,
Spinning splendor in the forming—truth and fic-
tion in the weave.

Elves and fairies in my fancies lightly dance and
twist and play;
Fountains throw their holy waters with the rain-
bow in their spray;

Babbling brooks through verdant meadows wind
their way in velvet sod;
Mighty trees, so tall—majestic, lift their branches
—bow to God.

For thy love (as thoughts subconscious through
my brain recesses well),
I have builded us a cottage, and together there we
dwell.

There our child in infant prattle learns to form
coherent words,
There his baby footsteps totter 'neath the tree
to catch the birds;

No vain whimpers mock his failures—no regret
can mar his life,
For this realm defieth sorrow, and felicity is rife.

Peacefully my dream is passing—shades and
fancies fade away,

But the thoughts they leave behind them cannot
vanish in a day.

How I love these magic visions, drawing upward
in their flight,
Deifying lowly mortals in their forming for a
night.

As their wings departing flutter, how I linger in
the spell—
Cling to each vague, mystic changing of the
scenes I love so well.

Yet methinks the visions linger longer than their
actual flight:
Purify me—draw me nearer from an erring course
to right.

THE MOTHER TOUCH

I dream'd I was a child in sweet repose.
I slept, methought, upon my little bed,
When lo, a hand was laid upon my head.
The angel of my infancy arose:

Her face so fair—a face I loved to see
Was smiling fondly, radiant above;
And eyes so soft and blue and full of love
Gazed down upon my features tenderly.

I dream'd I was a child—nor understood
The look of love, the tenderness displayed,
The gentle hand upon my temple laid
That soothed my fears and made my head feel
good.

That selfsame face of which I dream so much
Has softly soothed me in the after years;
While oft' in slumbers linger baby fears
They still are routed by that mother touch.

THE GLOAMING

In the shadows of the gloaming,
When Apollo seeks repose,
And the fairy starts to roaming
Plotting mischief as he goes,
All the venom of my being
Sinks into a languid state,
While the sunbeams yet are fleeing
Fearing they shall be too late.

When the robin red-breast wanders
Homeward chirping to his mate,
While the sad-eyed maiden ponders
O'er the falsity of Fate,
With a spurt of inspiration
All my inmost being glows,
And the spirit of sensation
Softly ebbs and softly flows.

All yon gilded clouds above me,
That reflect the mellow light,
Just like harbingers remove me
From the daytime to the night;
Yet they seem to hold my vision,
And my thoughts upon the day
Until darkness in derision
Rudely drives them all away.

And the sparrows condescending
Chirpings with the other birds
Sound like music when they're blending
With the lowing of the herds;
And the crickets' merry chorus,

Coming from some hidden place,
Adds a charm to all before us
Which the night will soon efface.

Then when Morpheus encloses
All the world in fond embrace,
Dewdrops gather on the roses,
And Diana shows her face.
Songs of angels during slumbers,
Softly floating from above,
Bring the lowly sleeping numbers
Gentle lullabies of love.

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